

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

At the outset, Applicants note with appreciation the courtesy extended by Examiner Robert Beatty to Applicant's representative, Chien Yuan, in a personal interview conducted on September 9, 2004.

Claims 29-56 are currently pending. The foregoing amendment amends claims 29-33 and adds new claims 34-56. Applicants submit that support for amended claims 29-33 and new claims 34-56 is self-evident from Applicants' original disclosure, including Figures 4-6 and corresponding descriptive portions of the specification. Thus, no new subject matter is introduced by the foregoing amendment.

The Office Action objected to the Abstract of the Disclosure. Also, claims 29-33 were objected to for informalities. Claims 29-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kawata (U.S. Patent No. 4,615,364). In addition, claims 29-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Yoshino et al. (JP 03-267965; hereinafter "Yoshino"). Further, Claims 29-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Saito (U.S. Patent No. 5,150,162).

At the personal interview, Examiner Beatty indicated that amended claims 29-33 appear to patentably define over Kawata, Yoshino, and Saito. For example, none of these three documents describes the container including a mouthpiece having a circular outlet and engagement openings configured to engage with guide members provided at a setting portion on which the container is to be mounted, as recited in amended independent claims 29-33. Rather, Kawata describes a developer receptacle that includes bayonet projections that mate with guide slots of a hopper.¹ Also, in contrast to amended claims 29 and 33, Yoshino

¹ See, e.g., Kawata at Figures 2A, 7A, and 9A.

describes a developer container including a non-circular outlet.² Also, in contrast to amended claims 29 and 33, Saito describes a toner cartridge that includes a lug that mates with a notch of a toner hopper.³

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claims 29 and 33 patentably define over each of Kawata, Yoshino, and Saito. As such, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 29 and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). In addition, there is no suggestion in the prior art to modify the teachings of Kawata, Yoshino, or Saito to arrive at the features of the present claims and, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art also fails to render obvious the present invention.

Further, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that claims depending from independent claims 29-33, including new claims 34-44, also patentably define over the cited documents.

New claims 45 recites, among other features, a mouthpiece including a circular outlet and "means for receiving guide protrusions provided at a setting portion on which the container is to be mounted...the circular outlet being positioned at a center location between the positions of the means for receiving." Also, new claim 49 recites, among other features, "mounting the toner container at a setting portion of an image forming apparatus by inserting guide members at the setting portion into the engagement openings."

For at least the reasons discussed above with respect to amended independent claims 29 and 33, Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 45 and 50, and claims depending from new claims 45 and 50, patentably define over Kawata, Yoshino, and Saito.

² See, e.g., Yoshino at Figure 3.

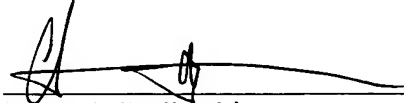
³ See, e.g., Saito at Figures 11 and 12; and Column 7, lines 28-36.

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Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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